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A SELECTION FROM  
THE WORKS OF  
SIR HENRY RAEBURN







# SIR HENRY RAEBURN

A Selection from his Portraits  
reproduced in Photogravure by T. and R. Annan  
with Introduction and Notes by

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY



EDINBURGH

Printed by T. and A. CONSTABLE for the Royal Association  
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## LIST OF PORTRAITS

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## INTRODUCTION







# SIR HENRY RAEburn

BORN 1756. DIED 1823.



INCOMPARABLY the best of British portrait painters, as well as the most completely fashioned and equipped of British artists, is the first and greatest President of the Royal Academy. But there can be no manner of doubt—at all events for them that have eyes to see—that, alike in genius and accomplishment, alike in distinction of aim and in fulness of effect, the next to Sir Joshua Reynolds is Sir Henry Raeburn. It is true that his renown is rather local than general—that, unlike Sir Walter for example, he is rather a Scottish worthy than a hero of the race; and this despite the fact that the language of paint is universal, so that a Raeburn were no more a foreigner in Venice than a Titian is a stranger in Edinburgh. But the designs of Fame (especially when Fame goes masquing arm-in-arm with Fashion) are inexplicable of man; and that not so many years ago the artist of *Las Lanzas* and *El Primo* was less to the eye of Europe than the painter of *La Purissima*,—that Murillo was preferred to Velasquez, and an Italian at second-hand was more precious in



men's sight than one of the half-dozen true royalties of art—is a fact that should astonish nobody. Portraiture, indeed, is probably the most popular, being certainly the most 'interesting,' of all the departments of painting; and from Holbein downwards through the centuries, its practitioners amongst us have lacked neither opportunity nor recognition in their lives, and in their deaths have been remembered and esteemed with an enthusiasm sometimes wholly disproportionate to their deserts. For one or another reason Romney commands a higher price than Van Dyck, unless Van Dyck be at his very best; while you could furnish a gallery with Lelys and Knellers, and have something over to spend in Raeburns, for the cost of a single Gainsborough. This, of course, is fame—fame of a kind; but the fame of Raeburn is far other in type, and rests on very different grounds. He has neither Romney's 'sentiment' nor Gainsborough's 'charm'; his achievement is largely wanting in that purely 'personal' quality so dear to the British mind, and is touched with scarce a vestige of that imperfect, or 'wholly individual', craftsmanship so near to the British heart. It is sane in ambition, severe in style, distinguished in method, nothing if not artistic in effect. For all such qualities as 'latent poetry of suggestiveness', as 'exquisite yet lofty subjectivity', as 'passionate yet almost morbid subtlety of vision and realization',—for them and their like, I say, you must look elsewhere than here. He was content to be a painter, and to invest his work with the unpopular yet sovereign element of style. Fashion may take him up, or may pass him by: he may run into five



figures with the hapless Romney, or remain disdained of dealers, and only cherished on family or on local grounds—for the sake of his associations and by reason of the fact that, whatever the technical quality of his achievement, he is at all events *Scotus Scotorum*, a type of the Scotsman, and therefore a standing taunt to all the Englishmen that ever painted. Nothing can change the fact that next to Reynolds, here is the greatest painter of portraits, here is in some respects the finest exemplar of accomplishment and aim, these islands have yet achieved.

He was the son of 'a respectable manufacturer', and was born at Stockbridge, then 'a village about a mile distant from Edinburgh'. Nothing in his boyhood gave any promise of future greatness, except the fact that 'at the class of arithmetic'—I quote from his earliest biographer—'when the boys were amusing themselves in drawing figures on their slates,' the 'figures' Raeburn drew 'displayed a very striking superiority.' But, as was natural in the Edinburgh of the period, 'this did not lead any further,' or rather only led to the fact that, when Raeburn left Heriot's Hospital a boy of fifteen, he was apprenticed to 'an eminent goldsmith', and in no great while began to paint miniatures. 'In what manner,' says our author, 'this taste first showed itself is not exactly known;' but it 'certainly was altogether spontaneous'—was so much without 'lesson or example' that Raeburn had never 'even seen a portrait'. All this notwithstanding, his work was good enough to 'draw immediate attention among his acquaintances', and to induce his master to take him to see the portraiture of David Martin (1736-1798) who, albeit



‘an artist of only secondary talent’, had at this time ‘considerable employment in Edinburgh’, and whose work not only ‘altogether astonished and delighted’ his visitor but ‘made an impression which was never after effaced’. However this may have been, the visitor ‘continued to paint miniatures’, which miniatures were so ‘much admired’ as to be ‘soon in general demand’. In fact, he painted two a week (he was practising in oils, and taking lessons of the Sir Joshuas in the neighbourhood as well); and ‘as this employment, of course, withdrew his time from his trade’, an arrangement was made with his master, the eminent goldsmith, by which the eminent goldsmith ‘received part of his earnings, and dispensed with his attendance’.

Martin was a pupil and an assistant of Allan Ramsay (1713-1784), and had worked under and for that painter at Rome in his youth and in London in his manhood. At first he comported himself with Raeburn generously enough, lending him pictures to copy and assisting him with such counsel as he was competent to bestow. But in no great while he grew jealous of his pupil, whom he even accused of selling a copy from one of his (Martin’s) works. The result was open rupture, and in due time Raeburn established himself as his senior’s rival. He renounced the practice of miniature-painting—no trace of whose influence exists in the work that made him famous—and was a successful painter of portraits in oils and on the scale of life almost ere he was out of his teens. But he was a born artist—he could be content with nothing less than perfection; and at two-and-twenty, having married a lady (a Mrs. Leslie, *née* Edgar of



Bridgelands), who was something of a fortune, he departed from Edinburgh for London, where he went to see Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792). That great and distinguished artist received him with the utmost kindness, and having seen his work (Raeburn painted for some weeks in his studio), insisted that he must follow a course of study in Rome, the cost of which himself was ready to bear. Raeburn, however, was rich enough to be able to decline the loan, and to need nothing from Sir Joshua save a set of introductions 'to the most eminent artists and men of science in that capital'. He remained two years in Italy, 'assiduously employed in studying those great works of art with which that country abounds'; and in 1787 he returned to Edinburgh, set up a studio in George Street, and painted his way to the first place almost at a single demonstration, obliging Martin to quit the field, and establishing himself in a position which he held unchallenged till the end. Reynolds dead, indeed, there was none of his craft, whether in Britain or in Europe, who could be held to approach him either in insight or in accomplishment. It is said that later in life he thought of removing to London, and took counsel of Lawrence as to his chances of success. He had been elected an Associate in 1813, and he had the very next year been made an Academician, so that his prospects were obviously of the fairest. But Lawrence persuaded him to be content with his kingdom in the north, and in this way secured himself in his position as the painter of fashionable and distinguished England. He was wise in his generation, no doubt, but it is matter for lasting regret that he prevailed; for it is beyond question that Raeburn would



soon have filled the larger stage, and it is reasonable to assume that his example might have passed into a tradition, so that his sane and vigorous genius would thus have been felt as a force in English portraiture even to this day.

For the rest, the material he found in his native city was of the finest quality and type. The blessing of the Union was everywhere apparent, but Scotland was not yet Anglicized, and Edinburgh was still her capital in fact as well as in name. As the city at once of Walter Scott and of the Great Unknown, it was a metropolis of poetry and fiction; as the city of Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh* it was a centre of criticism; as the city of Raeburn and John Thomson it was one of the high places of portraiture and landscape; as the city of Archibald Constable and the Ballantynes it was a headquarters of bookselling and printing. It was the city of Reid and Dugald Stewart, of Erskine and Henry Dundas, of John Home and Henry Mackenzie, of Braxfield and Newton and Clerk of Eldin, of Francis Horner and Neil Gow; and as Raeburn painted the most of them—and indeed there was scarce an eminent Scotsman but sat to him—his achievement, as I have noted elsewhere, may be said to mirror some thirty years of the nation's life. Scarce anywhere, it must be owned, could he have found better models; and, for their part, these were thrice-fortunate in their painter. Honourable as were his beginnings, they scarce gave earnest of the consummate results of his later years. His genius, essentially symmetrical and sane, did but mellow and mature with time; artistic from the first, his accomplishment was most consummate at his death; his vision is



at its keenest in his latest efforts, and his life, if I may continue to repeat myself, 'was a piece of work as sound and healthy and manly as his art'. Thus, 'he is said to have lost a great deal of money by becoming security for a relative, but he bore his loss with great composure, and painted no more industriously after than before'; he spent much of his leisure in 'mechanics and natural philosophy'; he practised sculpture—it is said that when he was studying under Michelangelo in Rome, he came near to preferring it to painting—with a certain diligence; he 'excelled', says the biographer so often quoted in this note, 'at archery, golf, and other Scottish exercises'; he laid out and built 'on so judicious and tasteful a plan' that his estate became in no great while 'the most extensive suburb attached to Edinburgh'; he was an excellent talker; he appears to have been singularly fortunate in his domestic relations; he enjoyed the friendship as he commanded the admiration of the most distinguished men of his time; his health was perfect, he stood upwards of six feet two in his boots, 'it may be added that, while engaged in painting, his step and attitudes were at once stately and graceful.' His character and his career, indeed, have all the balance, the unity, the symmetrical completeness, of his genius and his achievement; and the rhythm to which they moved—large, dignified, consummate: like that of a Handelian chorus—remained unbroken until the end.

It came in 1823. Raeburn had been knighted the year before, 'in the course of that visit' of George IV. 'which has left so many grateful recollections in the minds of his 'Scottish subjects',—knighted



at Hopetoun House with the sword of Sir Alexander Hope; he had been bidden to London to paint the portrait of his sovereign, and had been compelled by the multiplicity of his engagements to defer his journey south; he was further to receive the title of His Majesty's Limner for Scotland. He was now a man of sixty-seven; his health was apparently imperturbable; with Scott and Adams and Shepherd, he had been for some years in the habit of 'interposing a parenthesis into the chapter of public business for the purpose of visiting objects of historical interest and curiosity'; and this year he had not only 'visited with enthusiasm the ancient ruins of St. Andrews, of Pittenweem, and other remains of antiquity', but had also 'contributed much to the hilarity of the party'. Returning to Edinburgh, he had been honoured with a sitting from Sir Walter, of whom he was anxious to finish two presentments, one for himself and one for Lord Montagu; and 'within a day or two afterwards' he was 'suddenly affected with a general decay and debility',—a condition 'not accompanied by any visible complaint'. He lingered no more than a week; and so it befell that the portrait of the Author of *Waverley* was the last to make any call upon a capacity of brain and hand unequalled in its owner's day and since. Thus does Scotland work: she has the genius of fitness, so that to the world without her achievement seems even instinct with the very spirit of romance. There are two great artists in the Edinburgh of 1823, and the one dies painting the other (a fact, by the way, which remains 'a subject of affectionate regret' to the survivor). One thinks of Hugo—of the 'Je crois en Dieu' of his last will and



testament, his careful provision of a pauper's hearse for the last journey of all. And one reverts with pride and gratitude to the supreme experience of this august pair of friends.

In London the task of publicly lamenting the death of Raeburn fell to the lot of Sir Thomas Lawrence, who—as a painter—‘expressed his high admiration for the talents of the deceased’ and—as a courtier—‘his unfeigned respect for that high feeling and gentleman-like conduct, which had conferred a dignity on himself, and the art which he professed’. This tribute ‘excited the visible sympathy of all present’, and, ‘as a native of Scotland’, Mr. Wilkie ‘took occasion to express his grateful feelings for the honour thus done to his country and his friend’. For the rest, it may be noted that a Raeburn Exhibition, the catalogue of which is fifty-seven numbers strong, was held soon after the painter's death, when the ‘evening admission’—the gallery being ‘Brilliantly Lighted up with Oil Gas’—was three shillings, and that in 1876 a second gathering of Raeburns, three hundred and twenty-five in all, was shown in the galleries of the Royal Scottish Academy. In the city of his birth he is represented by a set of examples, which includes the magnificent *Lord Newton*; in the National Gallery by a full-length of *A Lady*; in the National Portrait Gallery by a *Henry Mackenzie*, a *John Home*, a *Francis Horner*, and others; in the Louvre by *A Greenwich Pensioner*. In 1875 a selection of photographs from the more publicly distinguished of his portraitures—including, for example, those of Scott, M<sup>rs</sup> Queen of Braxfield, Clerk of Eldin, Lord Newton, John Home, Archibald Constable, Neil Gow,



and Dugald Stewart, to name but these—was published in Edinburgh, under the editorship of the late Dr. John Brown, who contributed a biographical and critical introduction. The present gathering consists, on the contrary, of examples, good and sufficient in themselves and easily accessible to the Committee. There is little or nothing to say about the most of them. But Raeburn has said enough. It is the function of such painters to touch with something of their own strength of brain and their own decision of character the sitters who have the honour to suggest their pictures to them. There is no local accent in Raeburn's brush. But, storied or not, the men and women whose presentments are given hereafter were divined by so sober and so keen an intelligence, and were realised by a method so vigorous and so direct, that they may stand for representatives of Scotland and for types of the Scottish race.

There is often virtue in a nickname; and much as Jameson is still renowned as the Scottish Van Dyck, even so, but with far greater propriety, might Raeburn—who used neither compasses nor chalks, dealt with his sitters directly through the medium of paint, and was identified with the use of the 'square' touch at least a couple of generations before its present apotheosis—be distinguished as the Scots Velasquez. It is told that when Wilkie was painting in the *Muséo del Prado* he had but to consider the work of the Spaniard to be 'always reminded' of the Scot's; and it is a fact that the one has at least some tincture of the breadth of manner, the unity of effect, the quick, inevitable touch, the notable capacity for preferring essentials—something, too, of the turn for masculine



veracious prose as opposed to high romantic poetry—which are present to so marvellous a purpose in the other. But these comparisons of less to greater are nothing if not misleading; and it were well to push the present parallel no further. The interest of art is absolutely incompatible with the sentiment of patriotism; and it is enough to know that Raeburn, whatever his degree of kinship to the king of brushmen, was an excellent and distinguished painter. Let me here repeat what I wrote of him in *A Century of Artists*—that record of a Scottish exhibition of pictures his place wherein was by no means that he might and should have held. ‘He came’, I said, ‘at the break between old and new—when the old was not yet discredited, and the new was still inoffensive; and with that exquisite good sense which marks the artist, he identified himself with that which was known, and not with that which, though big with many kinds of possibilities, was as yet in perfect touch with nothing in active existence. His draughtsmanship was good enough when he chose; his colour was sound enough to be distinguished; sober as it seems to us, his feeling for paint was very real; his brushwork—intelligent, vigorous, expressive—was that of a man of choice and forceful temperament trained in the ways and nourished upon the conventions of a great school. And with all this he was Henry Raeburn—a personality so shrewd and sensible, so natural and healthy and sincere, as to seem not out of place in the cycle of Walter Scott. He was content to paint that he knew, and that only; and his conscience was serviceable as well as untroubled and serene. Of the mere capacity of portraiture—the gift of perceiving



and representing individual character and form—he had more, perhaps, than any portrait painter that has lived; and not a little of his merit consists in that he was always so far its master as to be able to vocalize it, as it were, in the terms of paint. In other words his portraitures are, to begin with, pictures. Here, if you will, are facts; but here, unmistakeably, is paint, is accomplishment, is art. And that is why a bad Raeburn is better than a perfect Shee or a supreme Grant.’ That, I said, was why a good one might be compared without much suffering or offence to a good Sir Joshua: the truth being, of course, that Sir Henry at his strongest need hardly veil his bonnet to the best that have ever painted portraits. A gentleman is fit company for the king.



I

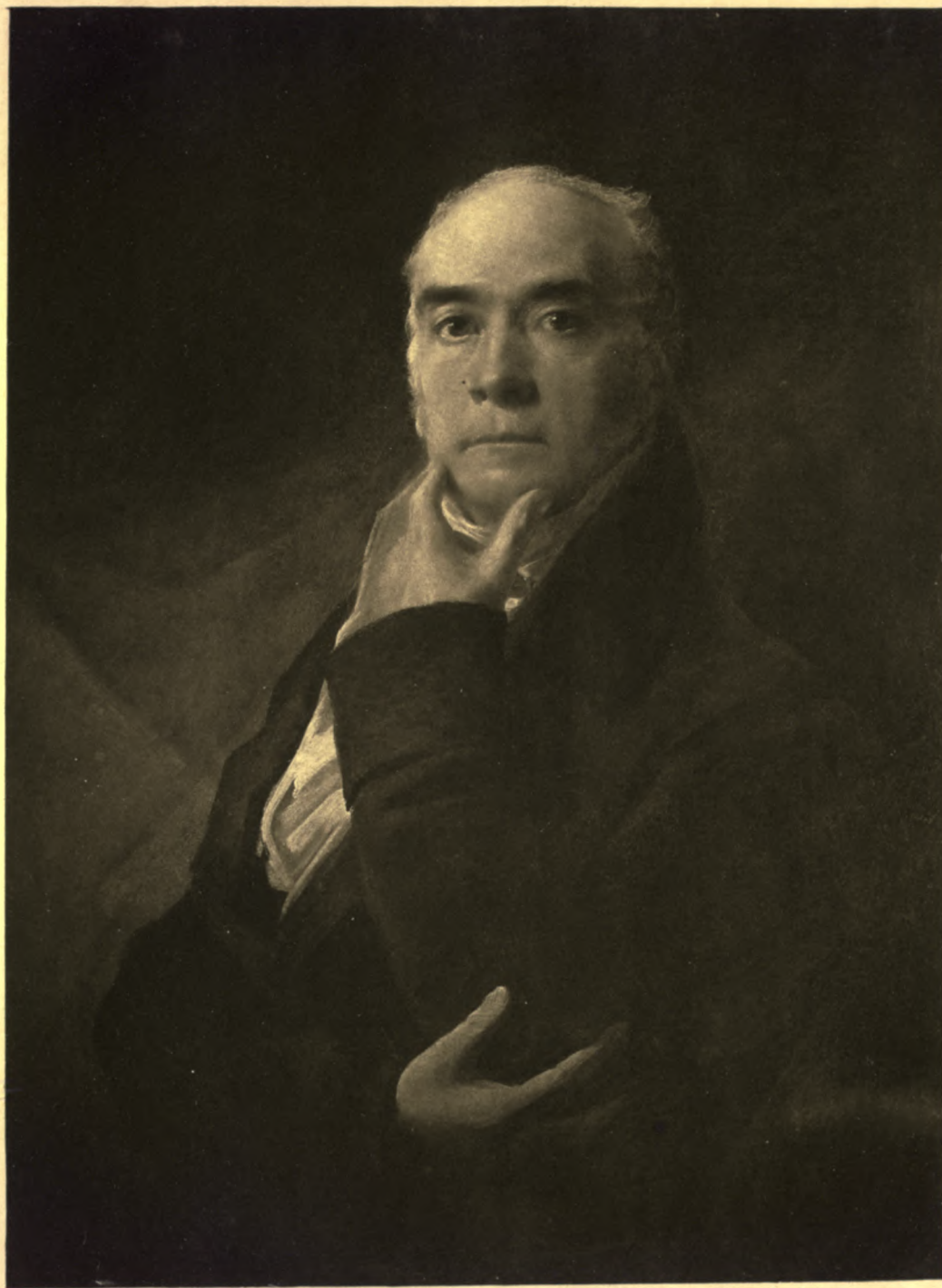
SIR HENRY RAEBURN

1756-1823















II

LADY RAE BURN





ANN EDGAR, LADY RAEBURN, was daughter of Peter Edgar of Bridgelands by his wife Anne Hay. By her first husband, James Leslie of Deanhaugh, she had two daughters, who afterwards became Mrs. Vere of Stonebyres and Mrs. Inglis. She was a fortune when she married Raeburn, and it was on her property, which he immensely improved, and which he is understood to have made over to her absolutely—that he built both Ann Street, which is named after her, and St. Bernard's Crescent. By Raeburn, whom she survived ten years, Lady Raeburn had two sons: Peter, who died at nineteen, and Henry, who married Miss Logan White, with whom he lived under the same roof with his parents until Sir Henry died, and by whom he had two sons and four daughters, some of them alive unto this day.











III

HENRY MACKENZIE

1745-1831

c





HENRY MACKENZIE was born, bred, and partly educated in Edinburgh, and studied law in London, whither he journeyed at twenty, and where he fell under the influence of Sterne. It was the Golden Age of Sentimentalism, and Mackenzie, who was uncommonly gifted that way, was speedily moved to express his quality in literature. He produced, in fact, *The Man of Feeling* (1771), and it took the reading public by storm. It was a tribute to the Muse of Sensibility—'Sweet Sensibility, parent of delight'. Mackenzie had caught the tune of the time, and he wept to such excellent purpose that the world wept with him. It knew not his name, for the book was anonymous. But Yorick and Saint-Preux and the high-souled Miss Harlowe had taught it to cry: here was a work in which 'the very press-gang could scarce keep from tears'; and it indulged in 'the luxury of woe' unstinting and unashamed. To 'taste' the book indeed, one should read it in an old edition—an edition whose margins still bear eloquent witness to the forlorn and melting habit of our sires. Such an edition—'Printed by James Ballantyne & Co., for Archibald Constable & Co., William Clark, and Manners & Millar, Edinburgh; and T. Cadell, and W. Davies, London'—lies before me as I write; and its pages drip with pathos much as those of Mr. Rider Haggard reek with slaughter. 'Weep, O weep, ye generous hearts', exclaims one passionate pilgrim at the close of a passage of peculiar moistness; and 'Who', inquires another—'Who can resist shedding a tear to the memory of Harley?' In this spirit was *The Man of Feeling* studied, and—as always happens in the case of an anonymous success: to the author of *Thoth*, for example, and to the author of certain *Scenes from Clerical Life*—the credit attaching to its authorship was claimed by a person with no more right to it than Adam. The impostor, who was a clergyman, was complete enough after his kind, for he went so far as to produce an 'original manuscript'—with cuts, corrections, additional chapters, and the rest; and Mackenzie was compelled in self-defence to come forth and discover his virtue to the race. Thereafter he published *The Man of the World* (1773), in which affecting tale he appears to have formulated the convention (thrice dear to novelists) of the Wicked Baronet, and four years later he bade his public to a new feast of tears in *Julia de Roubigné*. He was then but thirty-two years old; but he wrote no more novels. His vein, indeed, was of the thinnest: he had no humour; his characters are abstractions; his dialogue is tediously impersonal and insignificant; his style, for all its correctness, is frigid and jejune; and, having piped his eye through half-a-dozen volumes, it was wise



of him to put up his handkerchief, and 'blubber' (as he delighted to say) no more.

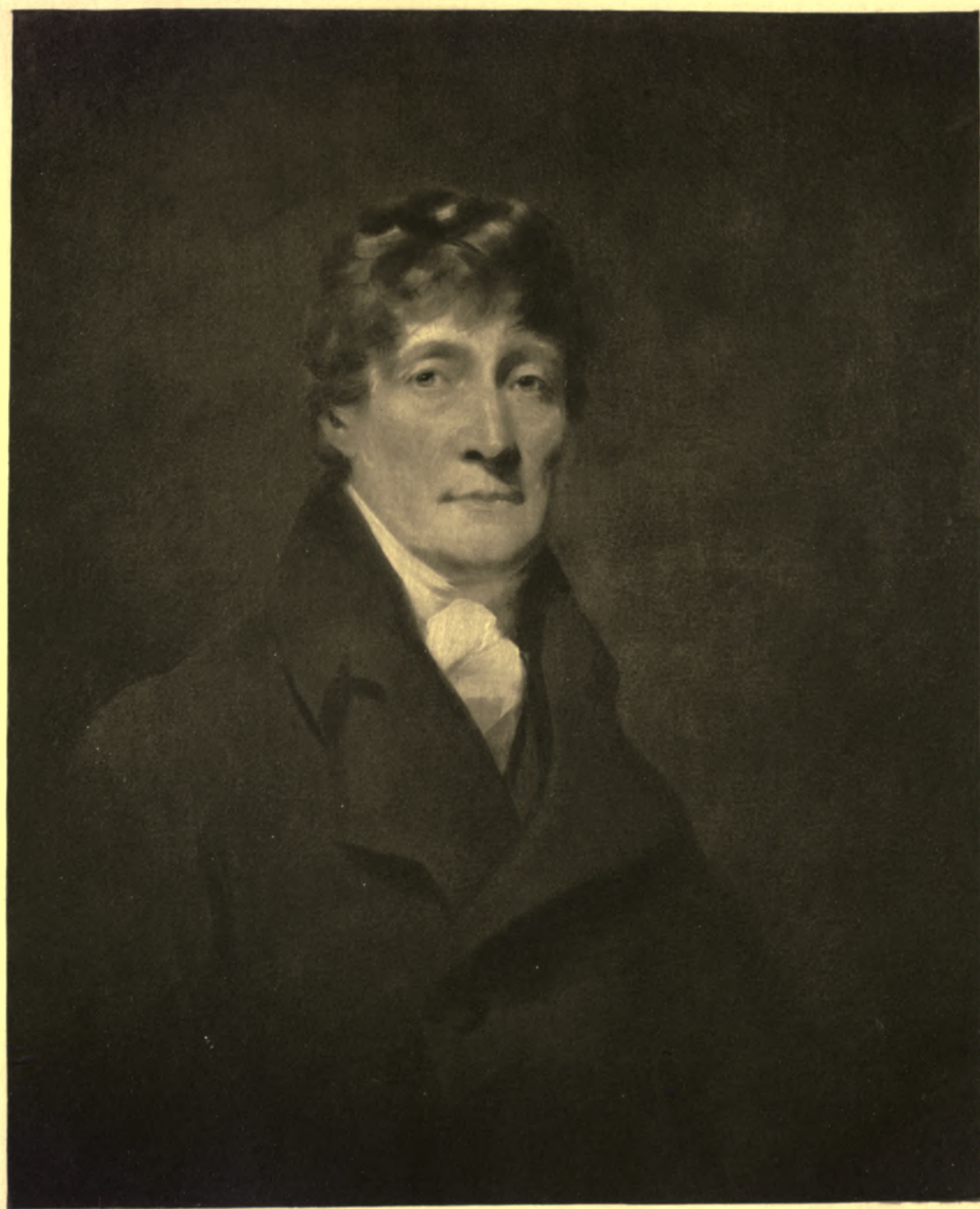
But he did not cease from writing. He was amiable and intelligent, and he was well-informed and lettered; he wrote the language with the formal propriety, the inexpressive elegance, of one delivering himself in a foreign tongue; it was still the century of Addison and *The Rambler*; it was still the Edinburgh of Kames and Monboddo and Hume; and Mackenzie, as was inevitable, turned essayist, and edited and partly wrote *The Mirror* (January, 1779—May, 1780), and *The Lounger* (February, 1785—January, 1787). He was Crown Attorney in the Exchequer Court of Scotland, he was an original member of the Highland and the Edinburgh Royal Societies, he appears to have been highly considered always and towards the end of his career to have commanded extraordinary respect. But as a man of letters he had done his work long ere the end of the eighteenth century; and in the Edinburgh of Scott and Jeffrey, the Edinburgh of the *Waverley Novels* and the *Review* and the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, he can have had little but a formal part. But his old age was distinguished and serene (it was to 'our Scottish Addison' that the Author inscribed his *Waverley*); and when he died, the city of his birth—the city that had wept over his novels, applauded his tragedy, and found edification in his essays—had exhausted her own capacities as a centre of intellectual inspiration and achievement, and was already tending to decay. In the development of these he had had no share; and if one thinks of him at all in these last days of his, it is as an old and rather perplexed and troubled god, not altogether sure of the divinity he has outlived, yet suspicious withal of the superior quality of his successors.

His novels are not art: they make you laugh when you should weep, and they go far to make you weep when you should laugh. His essays—well, what chance with a generation that finds *The Rambler* impossible to read, to which the work of Steele and Addison is much more a superstition than a religion, and which rejoices in the wit, the fancy, the humour, the artful yet distinguished style, of Mr. R. L. Stevenson,—what chance, I say, have the essays of Henry Mackenzie? It is best to remember him not as a writer but as an amiable and accomplished man, who did his utmost for literature, and did it to such purpose that he had the honour to sit to Henry Raeburn.















IV

MISS JANET SUTTIE



**M**ISS Janet and Miss Margaret Suttie were daughters of Sir James Grant Suttie of Balgone, county Haddington, fourth Baronet, who succeeded his aunt, Janet Grant, Countess of Hyndford, in the estates of Prestongrange.











V

MISS MARGARET SUTTIE















VI

JOHN TAIT OF HARVIESTOUN, W.S.

1727-1800

AND GRANDSON

D





JOHN TAIT of Harviestoun, Writer to the Signet and Sheriff of Clackmannan and Kinross, whose portrait Raeburn painted, was an Aberdeenshire man, and married Miss Charles Murdoch of Cumloden. To their son Craufurd Tait and Susan Campbell his wife there was born a large family of boys and girls, one of whom, the youngest, was the late Archbishop of Canterbury, while another was the 'grandson' of the present picture, into which he was painted three years after his grandfather's demise.

This grandson, also a John Tait, was born in 1796; was educated at the High School under Adam and at Harrow under Butler; studied law at Edinburgh and Geneva; was received an advocate in 1819; and was Sheriff of Clackmannan and Kinross by the grace of Peel, Sheriff of Perth by the grace of Lord Derby; and was elected Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Advocates.

A conspicuous figure in Edinburgh society, he lived for many years at 2 Park Place with his brother James; and when at last the pair migrated, Lord Neaves was inspired to celebrate the event in one—and that one by no means the worst—of his pleasant and kindly songs:—

What ! removed from Park Place? can it really be true,  
Can the tree quit the spot where for ages it grew?  
The Castle as well as the Cross might come down,  
Or the Parliament House take a walk out of town,  
Astonishment dwelt upon everyone's face  
When we knew that the Taites had removed from Park Place.

He died in 1879.











VII

MRS. CAMPBELL OF POSSIL



**M**RS. HARRIET CAMPBELL of Possil was the eldest daughter of Donald Maclachlan, Esq. of Maclachlan, and was born on 16th November 1790. She married Alexander Campbell of Possil on 1st November 1810.











VIII

MRS. CAMPBELL OF PARK



MRS. CAMPBELL of Park was wife of Colin Campbell, Esq. of Park,  
in Renfrewshire.











IX

FRANCIS HORNER, M.P.

1778-1817





MAN fortunate in his friends, his opportunities, above all his character—such was Francis Horner. He had not the quality of greatness, but affection followed him, and he commanded esteem. His was the very genius of moderation, and to recall him is to come face to face with the perfect Whig. In life exemplary, honourable in practice and in aim, he died after a career that had been serviceable as well as distinguished, still young enough to inspire the belief that his measure had not been given, and that what he had done was but an earnest of that he might one day do. He was the most respectable of men. His parts were not of the first order, but they were useful and solid, and he did the utmost that was in him to turn them to a right account; his disposition was of singular sweetness, his character an alloy of all the tranquil virtues. ‘The Commandments were written on his face’, said Sydney Smith; ‘and I have often told him there was not a crime he might not commit with impunity, as no judge or jury who saw him would give the smallest degree of credit to any evidence against him.’ That this was so, and that his face was but the mirror of his nature, is a fact attested by the opinion of friends and opposites alike.

He was part English by descent, but he was born and bred in Edinburgh. He began as an *alumnus* of Nicol (Burns’s Nicol) and Adam at her High School, where he was top-boy, or rather ‘dux of the Rector’s class’; he was a student at her University; and, after spending a year in England under the Rev. John Hewlett, with a view to getting ‘rid of his Scottish accent and pronunciation’—a task to which he addressed himself with characteristic diligence and punctuality—he was duly qualified (1800) to plead in her courts. At school he had been known as ‘the ancient Horner’, and ‘the Sage’; and it is plain that from the first he took himself with exemplary seriousness. ‘The natural tendency of his mind’, says Hewlett of his sometime pupil, ‘led to the exercise of reason rather than the indulgence of fancy’; and ‘in the two years that remain to me’, himself remarks in 1797, ‘I must perfect myself in the Latin and the Greek classics, acquire an elegance and facility of English style both in writing and in speaking, make myself a proficient in the general principles of philosophy, and a complete master, if possible of law as a science’. To this end, he continues, ‘joined to regular and continued habits of industry, my studies must be prosecuted likewise in a systematic manner, on a plan seriously laid down’. Thus, he is to approach ‘Euripides as a master in describing and imitating the human passions, Demosthenes as the greatest and most perfect model of eloquence for a British lawyer’,



and Homer not only as 'the fountain and original . . . of all that is divine in invention and elegant in composition' but also as 'the historian of civil society at a particular stage', and therewithal 'an admirable delineator of general manners and the varieties of human character'. More, he is to 'regularly read and intensely study' the works of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Tibullus; his Cicero he must 'almost learn by heart'; he must be thoroughly acquainted with the history of political economy; he must be 'familiarily acquainted with all the laws of the material world latterly discovered'; he must master 'the general science of politics, legislature, and jurisprudence, as systematized by reasoning and illustrated by history'. There is a great deal more of this tremendous 'plan'; but I shall quote no more of it, as it does not appear that Horner ever attempted to live up to its design. It is a characteristic document, however; for Horner wrote it at nineteen, and, inasmuch as the child is father to the man, the boy who thus abounds in good intentions nine times in ten develops into an exemplary or perfect Prig. It says much for Horner that he did nothing of the kind, but turned his attention to the currency and corn and subjects of that sort with—not an assumption of superiority but—a strong desire to be useful. That and no more.

Not all the wits of Edinburgh have been temperate; not all her 'tavern hours' or sober or demure. Horner was always the Ancient, 'the Sage', of High School days; and, whatever his regard for Mr. Paulus Pleydell in the Courts, he would none of his way of life outside them. He pored upon Gibbon—(whom he patronised)—and upon Montesquieu; he assimilated 'many satisfactory observations' from 'Quintilian, Cicero, and Condillac'; he wrestled soberly with Bailly and Condorcet, with Lord Bacon and Lord Kames, with Turgot and Hume and Adam Smith; he composed essays 'on imagination, the dramatic unities, the marvellous, imitation, national character, the opposition party in Parliament', and other stimulating and suggestive themes. He is found studying 'with a view to style, about thirty lines of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*'; he frequents the Speculative Society, where one evening he is 'much entertained with a discussion between Brougham and Jeffrey on colonial establishments'; he is even caught in the act of 'feeding his ambition' with 'the prospect of accomplishing a work similar to that which Sir Francis Bacon executed almost two hundred years ago', and seriously perpending if 'his speculations' shall be 'thrown into the form of a discussion commenting on the *Instauratio Magna*', or shall be 'entitled to an original form under the title of a *View of the Limits of Human Knowledge*, and a *System of the Principles of Philosophical Enquiry*'. Then,



in the intervals of Tack and Wadset, of Pledge and Hypotheque, and Cautionary, of the Right of Recovery and the Acts of *Sederunt*, he 'revels' in Milton, Virgil, and De Lille—they 'alternately supplied me a luxurious repast'—and is conscientious enough to decline an opinion on a work of the last till he has given it 'a repeated perusal'; he concerns himself with chemistry, geology, mineralogy, anatomy; he begins 'a course of reading on the details of political economy' with 'an investigation of the corn trade'. In brief, he lives his life and holds his ideal in chase; and his ideal is so plainly knowledge, that 'the recollection of a note in Gibbon' on 'the erudition of Sir W. Jones diffuses a glow and pulsation over my whole frame'. I incline to the belief, indeed, that after Horner's character this turn for 'improving' reading, this thirst after useful information, is Horner's chief quality. 'Do, my dear Horner', Jeffrey writes years after this, 'assume a more manly pride, and trample this fastidiousness under your feet; make yourself known for what you are, and *at thirty-one and in this crisis of Europe*'—(the italics are mine)—'do not still think of training yourself for futurity.' He spoke in vain. Horner's primary interest was the mind of Francis Horner; and in the days immediately preceding his decease, I find him once more 'feeding his ambition' with a plan of acquisition and accomplishment which differs in no essential particular from that he had contrived to stimulate the energy and fortify the purpose of his austere and studious youth.

It is a man of twenty-three who 'confesses', in respect of the company of women, that he 'rather yields to the speculative ambition that pleasure ought to be derived' from it 'than to the remembrance of pleasure actually experienced'; and it was a man of twenty-three who quitted Edinburgh for London with a view to estimating 'the comparative advantages of exercising the profession of law in the two countries'. The result of his expedition—in which he encountered Romilly, Mackintosh, Scarlett, Rogers, Bobus Smith, and others, and was himself described by James Abercromby as an individual in whom 'rational opinions and extensive information' were 'united with integrity, amiableness of disposition, and modesty in manners'—was that, having 'no hesitation in giving a decided preference to England', and having assisted at the foundation of the *Edinburgh* to the extent of contributing four articles to the first number, he settled in the southern capital in the March of 1803. But there was no break in his way of living. He went into society—Whig society, of course—more than in Edinburgh; but he read, he meditated, he concerned himself with corn, he indulged in what he called his 'gratifications in speculative truth', he took counsel with and about himself, much as of yore. Nothing—not even Trafalgar—appears to have betrayed him



into intemperance; nothing—not even the death of Pitt—appears to have ruffled the even surface of his equanimity. At eight-and-twenty he accepted the offer of ‘a seat on the Board of Commissioners, established by the East India Company, to adjust the long-disputed claims of the creditors of the Nabob of Arcot’, which seat he filled for some three years. Meanwhile he was thinking of politics as a profession, and the House of Commons as the true scene of his career. Early in 1806 he is heard admitting that he might certainly be tempted by ‘a good close Whig borough, the property of a staunch old Whig family’; and six months afterwards you find him ‘going off this evening into Cornwall . . . to be returned for St. Ives’. There was ‘a sort of contest’, and in the course thereof, (incredible as it may seem,) ‘I . . . kissed some women that were very pretty’. The life of the new Parliament was only some four or five months long, and Horner, unseated at the general election, was, ‘by the friendship of Lord Carrington’, returned for Wendover. In 1807 Mr. Whitbread described him in a speech to the Commons as ‘well-known in letters and at the bar of Scotland’, and as ‘sure to become an ornament of this assembly’; and he was elected a member of the Whig Club. Three years later he brought forward the State of the Currency question, with which he remained identified until his death, and was made chairman of the Bullion Committee, whose *Report* he presented to the House in 1811; in 1812 he was offered and accepted a seat for St. Mawes, spoke on several subjects—as Insolvent Debtors, the Poor Law, India, and that ancient siren, Corn; in 1814, after certain speeches—on the Corn Laws, the Slave Trade, Ireland—he went a round in France and Switzerland, returned to ‘take an active part in the debates’, and spoke (always in the Whig interest) on such congenial themes as the Irish Peace Preservation Bill, the Bank Restriction Act, and the conduct of the naval war against the United States. In 1816 he contributed to the discussion of the Treaties of Peace a discourse which Romilly thought ‘admirable’, which Lord Colchester declared ‘most powerful, argumentative, and profound’, and which, according to Whishaw (an intimate friend), ‘established’ the orator’s character and reputation not only in Parliament but with the public; and he spoke besides on the Alien Bills and on Canning’s admission that ‘a speedy settlement of the Catholic claims had become necessary’. This is his last appearance in Parliament. He has long been ailing, and in the autumn of the same year he is enjoined the strictest abstinence from work. It is thought that his lungs are touched, and he starts for Italy with his brother Leonard. He crosses the Alps, he ships himself at Genoa for Leghorn, and so he reaches Pisa. There he has ideas about Dante, and becomes an adept in Macchiavelli, whose effect



upon him is to make him long for the arrival of 'Addison's *Spectator* and Smith's *Moral Sentiments*'. Presently he finds so much relief in opium that, he writes to Lady Holland, 'I could almost fall down and worship my pill like a Turk'. His health seems to improve, but the appearance is an illusion. Early in February, being full as ever of interest in literature and life, and politics, and having just succeeded in sketching a plan of conduct, study, achievement, 'under the auspices of opium and returning spring', he suddenly dies of 'not consumption, but an enlargement of the air-cells, and a condensation of the substance of the lungs'; a malady 'no medical skill could have cured'.

He was buried in the Protestant cemetery at Leghorn. He was only thirty-nine years old. There were many 'tributes to his memory', in Parliament and out of it; and they made him the hero of a memorial, the work of Sir Francis Chantrey, in Westminster Abbey. 'There is no public man'—so Romilly wrote to him some three or four months before—'whose life is of such importance to the country . . . as yours'; and perhaps his loss seemed greater than it was. But it is certain that he was beloved by his friends; that enemies he had none—only political opponents; and that he left the reputation of a capable citizen and a good and virtuous man.











X

MRS. MACONOCHIE WELWOOD



**A**NN BLAIR was the eldest daughter of Robert Blair of Avontoun, Lord  
President of the Court of Session, and the wife of Alexander Maconochie  
Welwood, second Lord Meadowbank, of Pitliver and Meadowbank.





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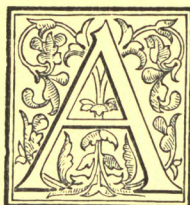




XI

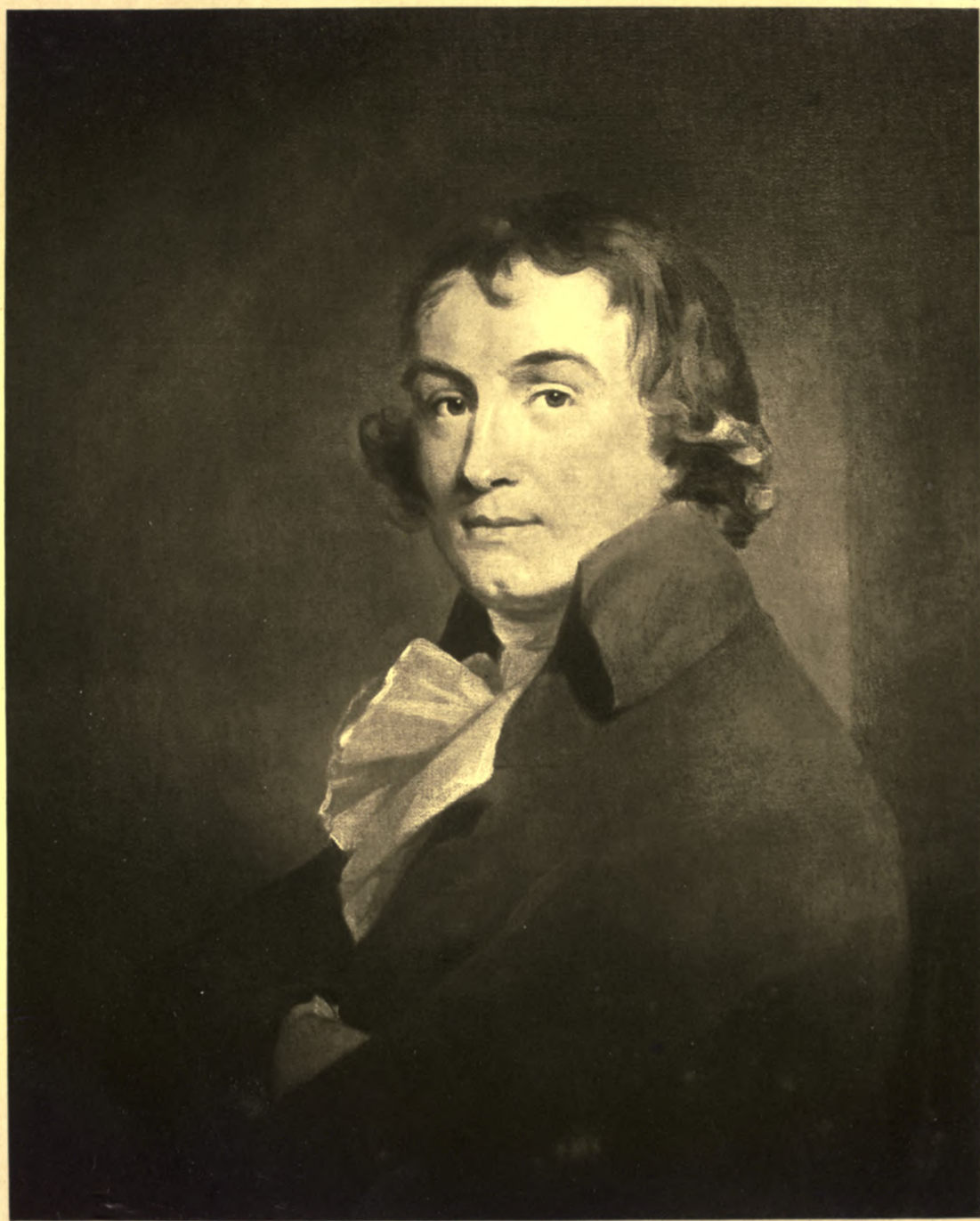
LORD ABERCROMBY





ALEXANDER, youngest son of George Abercromby of Tullibody, and brother of General Sir Ralph Abercromby, was born October 15, 1745; was called to the Scottish Bar in 1766; in 1780 was an advocate-depute under Lord Advocate Dundas; was raised to the bench in 1792, and died at Falmouth—from the effects of a cold—November 17, 1795. He was distinguished for personal beauty and for singular sweetness and gaiety of mind; and he was one of the coterie who started *The Mirror* in 1779, and *The Lounger* in 1785. Henry Mackenzie (the 'Man of Feeling') remarks in an obituary read before the Royal Society that 'his papers are distinguished by an ease and gentlemanlike turn of expression, by a delicate and polished irony, by a strain of manly, honourable, and virtuous sentiment'.











XII

MRS. BALFOUR

F



CATHERINE, daughter of Mr. Cant of Thurston and Giles Grange, was the wife of John Balfour (1715-1796), publisher and bookseller in Edinburgh, son of James Balfour of Pilrig.











XIII

JAMES WARDROP OF TORBANEHILL



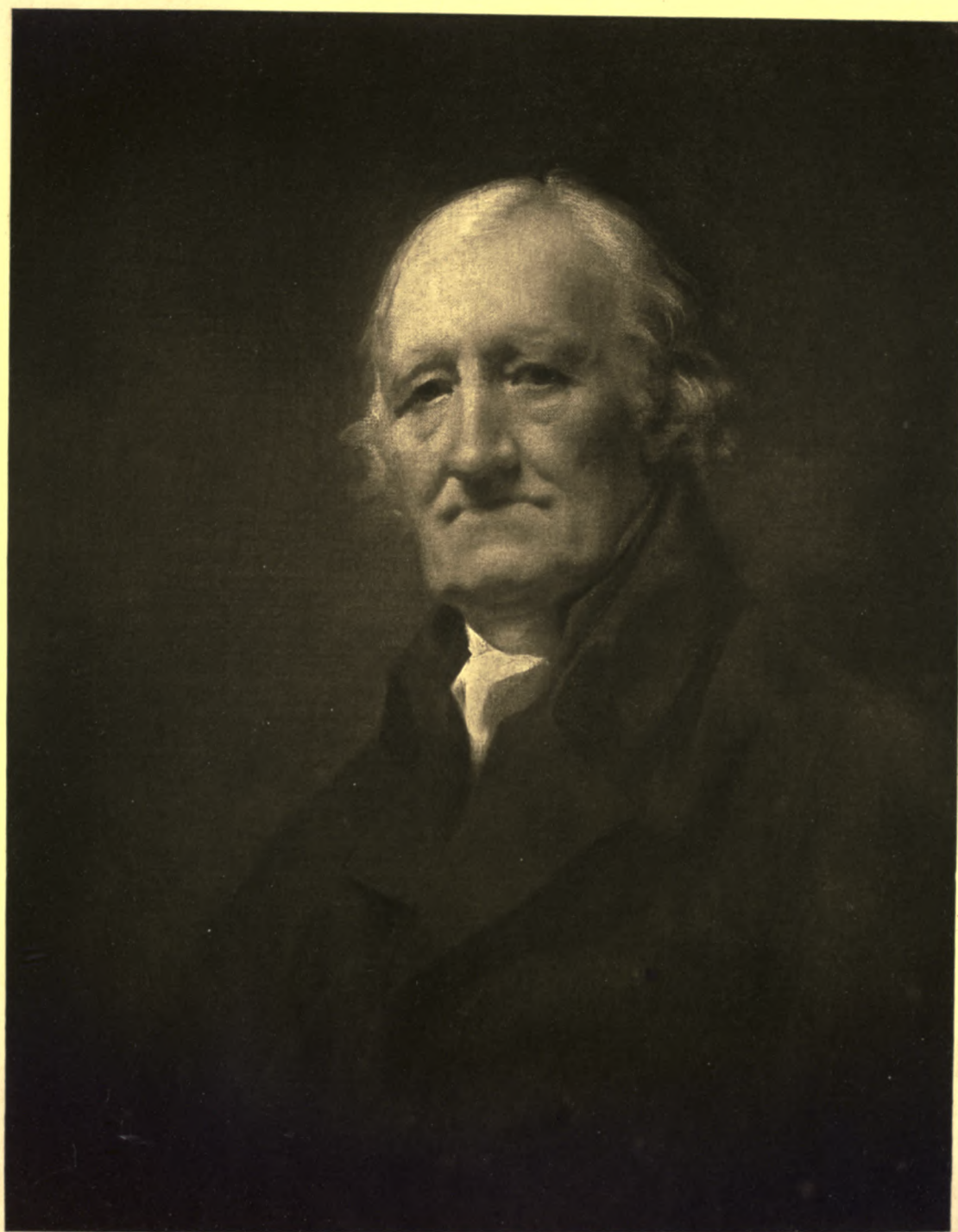


AMES WARDROP, of Torbanehill, Linlithgowshire, was born in 1738, and died in Edinburgh—where he had resided for many years—as late as 1830.

In 1775 he married Marjory, daughter of Andrew Marjoribanks of Marjoribanks. Their son James transferred himself to London, and was there appointed Surgeon-Extraordinary to George iv., with whom he visited Edinburgh in 1822.

The estate of Torbanehill, which had been in the Wardrop succession for several generations, was sold by the original of this admirable portrait—perhaps the finest Raeburn ever painted.











XIV

MRS. GEORGE KINNEAR



**F**EARNE, daughter of Dr. Gardiner, an Edinburgh physician of some distinction, and wife to George Kinnear, an Edinburgh banker.

















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